



Betsy Burton

The King's English Bookshop
Salt Lake City, Utah



What do you sell?

As our name implies, our main products are books of every kind – children's, young adult, nonfiction, fiction, poetry, etc. We also sell journals, pens, reading glasses and other book-related gifts.

How long have you been in business?

The King's English opened its doors in 1977. We've been a proud part of the Salt Lake City community for 38 years.

How many employees do you have?

We have 25 employees, some full-time, some part-time, all voracious readers who not only love books but love talking about them to the people who come into our store.

What is your favorite part about owning your business?

I love the art of bookselling. And it is an art – one that requires understanding your customer's reading tastes before making recommendations and having broad enough knowledge to find the right book for that customer. We're all matchmakers at The King's English. We take great joy in putting the right book in the right hands. Books change lives.

How are you engaged in the community?

The King's English is a community center, hosting countless events for adult and children's authors from all over the country, as well as 16 book clubs, writers' workshops, and other community events. We also publish a quarterly newsletter, The Inkslinger, do monthly radio reviews on our local NPR station, KUER, donate to local charities and participate in Books Inside, which is an effort to provide books for prisoners at no cost. Outside the store we co-founded and I still co-chair Local First Utah, an organization with a mission to educate the public, government and businesses themselves about the importance of local business to the economy and the community.

How has the online sales tax loophole impacted your business?

With the rise of online shopping, we have adapted to compete with e-retailers, but it's hard to do so on an un-level playing field. It's frustrating when customers buy books online to avoid sales tax. Not only do we lose sales because of this tax loophole, we also have to cut back on our community involvement because our profit margins are lower. Bookstores provide an important gathering place for readers and for the entire community. Congress needs to pass e-fairness legislation. Our government has no business favoring one group over another in terms of taxation.

